

Letter to the Speaker of the House on the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program

April 1, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On March 28, 1998, I sent a letter to the Leadership addressing my concerns regarding H.R. 2400, the Building Efficient Surface Transportation and Equity Act of 1998. As the House prepares to consider this bill, I want you to know that I am adamantly opposed to any attempts to weaken or repeal the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program extension contained in this legislation.

We have seen time and again that women and minorities are excluded from the contracting process when a DBE program is not in place. The DBE program is not a quota. The existing

statute explicitly provides that the Secretary of Transportation may waive the 10 percent goal for any reason and that this benchmark is not to be imposed on any state or locality. Rather, the DBE program encourages participation without imposing rigid requirements of any type.

I ask that you oppose efforts to strike the DBE program from the bill.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

April 1, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period December 1, 1997, to January 31, 1998. The previous submission covered events during October to November 1997.

International efforts on the Cyprus issue slowed during this period in anticipation of the February 1998 Cypriot Presidential election, which President Clerides won. It was, however, an active period for developments that affect Cyprus, including those in the area of EU-Turkish relations. Turkey perceived the Luxembourg EU Summit as a setback to its goal of closer integration with Europe. When I met Prime Minister Yilmaz here in December, I urged him to remain focused on Turkey's long-term interest in Europe.

There were negative developments on the island during this period. On December 27, the Turkish Cypriots indefinitely suspended bicomunal contacts between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In January, the Greek Cypriot National Guard assumed control of the Paphos airbase, which was upgraded to serve as a base for fighter aircraft. We reiterated to the Greek Cypriots our concerns about proceeding with the purchase of the S-300 antiaircraft missiles, which present a serious obstacle to achieving a settlement based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.